

CARE AND PRESERVATION OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

RECOMMENDING

That authority to consider, decide, and control each and all matters pertaining to the custody, care, repair, and preservation, etc., of public buildings be vested in the Secretary of the Treasury.

JANUARY 16, 1893.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D. C., January 13, 1893.

SIR: The Supervising Architect of the Treasury in his report for the year ending September 30, 1892, makes the following statement and recommendation:

There can be no question that the clear implication of law, as the same is found in connection with the general statutes governing the matter of submitting estimates of appropriations to Congress, and the various acts making appropriations for public buildings under the control of the Treasury Department, is that the public buildings which Congress authorized the erection or the acquisition of, through the Secretary of the Treasury, and annually provides for the care and repair and preservation of, were intended by Congress to be under the exclusive control and in the custodianship of the Secretary of the Treasury.

This conclusion is fully supported by the fact that Congress has never questioned the right of the Secretary of the Treasury to submit "Estimates of Appropriations" for moneys needed in connection with the construction, repair and preservation, attendant labor for the care and protection of, and fuel, light, water, and furniture supplies, for such public buildings.

Up to the present time the matter of (1) assignment of rooms in such public buildings, as well as all matters pertaining to the (2) repairs and preservation; (3) vaults, safes, and locks; and (4) heating and hoisting plants therein; (5) fuel, light, and water supplies; (6) furniture and repairs of furniture for such public buildings, and (7) janitors' force necessary to keep the same in proper condition, have been, and must necessarily continue to be, duties of the Treasury Department.

The first, as well as the second, third, and fourth items above specified, are matters which receive attention through this office (the office of the Supervising Architect).

It has been the experience of the Department in some cases that certain officials connected with the different branches of the Government service entertain different views in regard to the subject, and it may be said that in some cases they have endeavored to control the matter of the assignment of rooms in such public buildings, and seemingly take advantage of the fact that there is no specific statute expressly vesting the Secretary of the Treasury with the custodianship of such public buildings, and the right to control the matter of the assignment of rooms therein.

It is therefore respectfully suggested that Congress should be asked to pass a specific act expressly vesting the Secretary of the Treasury with full and complete authority in such cases.

After fully considering said statement and recommendation and fully approving the same, and in view of the importance and necessity of having some specific law in regard to the subject, I have decided, and have the honor hereby, to recommend that the following legislation be enacted as soon as possible by joint resolution:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That authority to consider, decide, and control each and all matters pertaining to the custody, care, repair, preservation, etc., of the assignment, occupation, etc., of rooms, etc., by officers and employes of each of the several branches of the public service in, and the supply of fuel, light, water, furniture, etc., for, such public buildings, etc., which have heretofore been authorized or which may hereafter be authorized to be acquired or erected under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury for custom-house, internal-revenue, court-house, post-office, etc., purposes, is hereby expressly, fully, and completely vested in the Secretary of the Treasury.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, yours,

CHARLES FOSTER,
Secretary.

THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

